

R E M A R K S

The requirement for a certified copy of the priority document is noted; however, such a copy was filed and acknowledged by the USPTO – see annexed formalities notice mailed 07/07/2003.

Claims 1-17 have been reworded to eliminate the objected-to dependency. Claim 1 has been reworded to define the invention more clearly over the cited Moriau et al. US Patent 6,006,486.

Specifically, claim 1 has now been amended to recite the feature that the tongue (4) comprises on an under- or top side a plurality of lugs (9), each lug exhibiting a spacing from an adjacent lug. By providing a plurality of lugs rather than a single elongated lug, there is a reduction in the friction which must be overcome to effect a displacement of two panels parallel with the connecting joint. This is explained in the specification at page 7, lines 10-14.

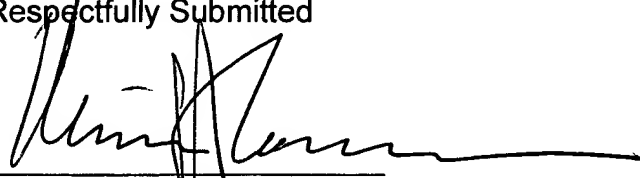
Thus, it will be understood that the plurality of lugs accommodates a secure connection of two panels but beneficially reduces the force required to move the connected panels with respect to one another.

It is respectfully submitted, that the Moriau '486 patent does not disclose nor does it suggest the claimed advantageous arrangement of lugs (9). Indeed, the European Patent Office has recognized the inventive novelty of this structure by its grant of a patent worded along the lines of amended claim 1, i.e. a claim directed to the concept of providing a plurality of discrete, spaced lugs rather than an elongated unitary lug.

As to claim 18, it is believed allowable in view of the addition of the "plurality of spaced lugs" language.

In view of the foregoing amendments, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. An early notice to that effect is requested.

Respectfully Submitted

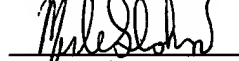


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Date: April 18, 2006



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